

Community Service News

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Comments on the Preceding Issue on Suburb and City

I find myself in thorough agreement with the general principles set forth [in the article on metropolitan area problems]. The problem of improving and making more effective the government of our large metropolitan areas is not an easy one, and I feel that we must continue to study and experiment for some time in order to work out a satisfactory solution.

—ROBERT B. GARRABRANT
Urban Land Institute
Washington, D.C.

The Boston area, though full of painful faults and of the machinations of a fairly bad political machine, contains, as I remember it—and it still had them when I was in Cambridge for a couple of weeks in the summer of 1952—many examples of communities with a small-town feel, well within the area governed or rather co-ordinated by the Metropolitan District Commission. They have retained small-community forms of government even though they are "bedroom" towns to a great extent.

The Philadelphia region realized, when some sort of attack on the local problem of city decay and suburban transport was overdue, that the mutually irresponsible methods of dealing with sewage put some millions of people in danger; I believe some such federation as you mention may result from the attack now being made on the sewage problem.

—WINSLOW AMES
Springfield, Mo.

The article by Mr. Morgan in the January-March issue is very timely and the type of solution indicated is one that could be applied in some of the very largest metropolitan areas, especially where the urban county for some reason is not suited to supply municipal services or the area spills over into several counties. It might be advisable in many instances to try to improve county government first as suggested by Victor Jones in an article in the May, 1951 issue of our journal, *Public Management*.

—ORIN F. NOLTING
International City Managers' Assn.
Chicago, Illinois.

I think from our experience it is most important to maintain separate political units in the natural community groups, even though there is a loss to the city in not having these people included in the political operation of the Metropolis as a whole, and some loss to the suburbanites in not being able to take part in the government of the metropolis of which they are a part. Actually, I suspect that we do have more control as outsiders than we would if we were included in the city, and I think there is very little likelihood that any more territory will voluntarily go into the City of New York.

—TRUMAN L. SAFFORD
Greenwich, Conn.

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Community Service, Inc., is an organization to promote the interests of the community as a basic social institution, concerned with the economic, recreational, educational, cultural and spiritual development of its members. Community Service was incorporated in 1940 as a non-profit organization to supply information and service for small communities and their leaders, in the belief that the decay of the American community constitutes a crisis which calls for steady and creative effort. The nation-wide interest expressed during the succeeding years has reinforced this opinion.

WHENCE COMES THE INITIATIVE?

In the vast international operations of the Marshall Plan, Point Four, UNRRA, and the Ford Foundation, individual effort may seem to have little place. However, in the case of many vast projects of such organizations, if an accurate accounting could be made of the expenditures involved in getting the project approved, in preliminary investigations by strangers, in general overhead expense, in administration salaries, in the relatively low efficiency of people who are working because of the income rather than from deep interest, and in the inevitable waste which results when strangers come into a situation, do what they can, and step out again, taking with them much of the accumulated experience; if a true accounting could be made of all these and other unproductive costs, it might often be found that the part which consists of actual productive expenditure would be only a minor part of the whole. The writer has known of cases where the actual residue of productive expenditure probably was not more than ten or twenty per cent. The myth that great size insures wisdom and efficiency is commonly controverted by the cold facts.

In the advancement of undeveloped areas, as in most other human affairs, the closer the thoroughly competent initiation and administration of a job can be to the grass roots of reality, the less will be the waste and the greater will be the productive returns. The same principle holds true in social relations as in economic affairs. Where people can work together as friends and neighbors on a basis of approximate equality, the contagion of good will and of mutual regard and confidence will be much more effective than if contact is through the agents of great governments or other corporate organization.

A recent example of the possible effectiveness of personal initiative and of first-hand, grass-roots activity is provided by a development in the kingdom of Jordan, as described in *Presbyterian Life* and reprinted in the July issue of *Reader's Digest*. The site of this case of personal initiative is the desert-like Jordan Valley not far from where the Jordan River flows into the Dead Sea. The personal initiative was supplied by Musa Alami, an Arab refugee from Palestine.

Alami is a man of maturity and experience. He had been secretary of the British High Commission, and had some resources when he left Jerusalem, going to a small country home near Jericho. In Jericho Alami had before him the problem of the thousands of Arab refugees in need of food and work—and the desert floor of the Jordan. He conceived of pumping from the underground flow of the Jordan waters to irrigate the desert. All those in power and authority, Jordan, British, UN and American Point

Four engineers and executives, turned Alami down, believing the project to be impossible. Finding power well-drilling equipment too expensive, Alami hired Arab refugees to work at drilling by hand in 120 degree desert heat. Water was finally found, the land irrigated, and a large resettlement and education project was made possible. The Ford Foundation finally made a grant for a school for orphaned Arab children on the project, where boys could learn to make a living cooperatively.

The full story gives a suggestion of the obstacles to be overcome, the dogged persistence and faith of the man who overcame them. It is a dramatic picture. But throughout the world the same has been true of practically every significant development. Those who think to find the easy way with all the material securities and amenities have placed an obstacle in their own way which prevents their having a deep effectiveness in service and the life fulfillment that they crave.

Alami's project in the Jordan valley could be reproduced in other forms thousands of times in underdeveloped regions; the poverty of those regions is largely a result of the failure of ordinary men and women to use unselfish initiative, faith and courage in dealing with their problems. The large organizations that failed to see Alami's vision were not at fault. The vision and initiative have to come from people who will use the resources at hand. This account of Musa Alami's work is chiefly significant as an example of the process that is generally necessary for significant achievement.

Ford Foundation money probably will be well spent on this undertaking. It will be more productive because the pattern was set by individual initiative and purposefulness.

Alami first made himself individually competent through half a century of living. Without that background he probably would have fumbled the opportunity when it came, or might have missed seeing it altogether. It is that process of becoming personally tempered and competent that many—perhaps most—young persons who are enthusiastic about public service do not seriously and persistently undertake. The quality of that preparation commonly is determined by the sincerity, sustained vigor and resourcefulness with which one does his work in his home setting. For a person who has made that kind of preparation an increasing range of responsibility can be recognized and seized. And no small part of one's effectiveness will be due to the fact that one's early training has been with small, down-to-earth, first-hand, human and physical situations. We do not know Musa Alami's early background in this respect, but we feel certain that in his project every such bit of first-hand, down-to-earth experience will be an asset, and every lack of it will be a handicap. The creative work of the world is chiefly limited, not by lack of resources or of opportunity, but by the limited number of individuals who have made such preparation.

THE ROLE OF SMALL COMMUNITY INITIATIVE IN THE WORLD CRISIS

By GRISCOM MORGAN

The professional approach to the community in America tends to take on the standard patterns and methods of the times, and to be an agency of things as they are. Today our country has more wealth and more power than the world ever knew, yet seldom have men been less secure in mind and spirit. Evidently the formulas by which we are living do not work perfectly. Our usual ways of trying to solve the problems of life are by more wealth, more knowledge, more power, more conveniences, more formal organization.

When men have become deeply committed to certain types of social development, instead of making necessary fundamental adjustments as occasion requires, they seek for success by modifying and developing prevailing patterns more and more vigorously, until they break down of their own weight. While the most striking example is our pursuit of the institution of war, that is not the only case. Even if war did not exist, there are other trends of development which may have similar results if we should continue to pursue them without restraint as *the* way to general well-being. For instance, there is the belief that general well-being can be advanced best by intensive drive toward increased academic training of professional people, toward increased consumption of goods, or toward formal organization.

Perhaps it would be well if more of our attention were given to stepping aside from the current procession of life, and to viewing it as from the outside, to see whether, perhaps, some deepseated or far-reaching changes may not be necessary in order to prevent a general deterioration in human affairs, and to open up new and greater possibilities. The following is an effort to take such a look. It is a reflection of the thoughts which come to us as we see the vast and ever-increasing outpouring of writing in the field of community organization and adult education.

* * *

Many people, observing what they consider to be the deterioration of the present social order, and losing hope for its regeneration, despair of Western civilization and indulge in violent resentment and bitter criticism. This attitude may be a serious misreading of the world scene. One of the chief impediments to progress has been persisting loyalty to mistaken methods and attitudes. People must be disillusioned of old and useless solutions, before they may be ready for fresh and more significant inquiry. But

if disillusionment leads to bitterness and despair, our opportunity and hope will be lost. The prevailing order of society—with its reliance on war and power—would be fatal as a resting place, but it is a highly developed spring-board for further advance, awaiting use for that purpose.

Society at large cannot but carry on its affairs in accordance with its own general character and development. Spain, obviously, cannot suddenly realize the freedom and progressiveness of Switzerland, nor can world civilization suddenly turn over a new leaf. There are no roots out of which such a tree may suddenly grow. The old order must be labored with, but its pattern is intrinsically limited. In contrast, civilization has won for pioneering minority groups great freedom and opportunity to demonstrate the soundness, or expose the weakness, of other courses of action and so make it feasible for society at large to accept such of them as have demonstrated their worth.

Minority groups have great responsibility toward community, city, state or nation—toward society at large. But that responsibility is not primarily to seek to impose upon a wider society courses of social action which pioneering groups conceive to be superior, especially if such superiority has not been thoroughly demonstrated, or if there have not been developed adequate roots in understanding, support and character within the larger society to enable it to sustain such a course in action. Many a dictatorship has arisen from the effort of well-meaning minorities and their leaders to move society as a whole into unproved courses of action. The responsibility of pioneering minorities to society at large is primarily to live, to demonstrate and to clearly express promising courses of action. Once demonstrated, general acceptance becomes possible.

This does not imply that government has not a role in initiating and carrying out social policy. For instance, a deadly variety of malaria was by chance transported from Africa to Brazil, where it began to spread, and might have decimated the population. By prompt government action it was exterminated before it got out of hand. But such policy was within the range of specialist authority and governmental action. Today's need is beyond that range.

For the established social order of Western society to survive calls for highly developed ability to make deepseated changes in dealing with social problems. That society in large degree is a great, interdependent whole, the basic pattern of which is deeply set. In China an obsolete pattern persisted to a point where decay was so far advanced that popular support was completely alienated; the same process is under way today in Italy and the Arab countries. It does not seem that our present social order *as a whole* has the ethical, spiritual and cultural quality to itself bring about the adoption of a way of living necessary for its survival. A nation of the size and

complexity of the United States may contain and shelter and nurture minority movements which are fundamentally recreative; but, except as such movements grow and gradually change the texture of the whole, the nation as a whole cannot make the necessary fundamental changes of attitude and pattern.

* * *

Modern man has unexampled variety and freedom to choose and adapt from among the cultures of the world as well as from the current outpourings of university, factory, printing press and radio. Comic books or classics, McCarthy or Eisenhower, each person must choose. This new freedom is inevitably greatly abused as well as greatly used. In the midst of such heterogeneity the safeguards against degeneration and confusion that prevailed in narrow closely-knit restrictive communities can no longer protect us. Man cannot turn back to another childhood; his freedom is necessary to his growing maturity. Because of this requirement of freedom, society as a whole, or its schools or churches, cannot choose and impose a pattern of life from among the infinite variety confronting us. It is now both possible and necessary for people individually and in groups to deliberately choose for themselves what kind of world they shall live in, and to assemble the elements and people necessary for the working out and realization of their values.

Progressive change is more commonly observed today in large organizations and in national government than in local affairs. A major reason for this is that those individuals who have the bent and capacity for change have generally migrated to the larger cities, working in large organizations, where they find fellowship—and partial community—with each other. Having no wholeness of small community life over which they might develop mastery and control, they have tended to concentrate attention and action to special areas and interests—such as welfare, research, or art.

It has been assumed that the brilliant minds and promising persons that have left the local community could best use their great talents in key positions of power and influence in America and abroad. They have largely left a major source of new growth in preference for a position of influence in the old. There has been lacking a balance in emphasis and value that makes futile, if not corrupting, much of our best endeavor.

The modern world makes it possible and necessary for communities of free people to build together a whole way of life in which the various elements are consistent with each other and with the whole. It is not enough to aim at achieving one or a few phases of good living. The church, the school, business, art, recreation, and various other elements, assuming that each is good of itself, do not stand, each by itself in its own independent world. Each of these elements as it now exists, is so much an integral part

of the world of today that it scarcely is able to respond to and to express the spirit of a different whole way of life. Our western world as it is *is* an integrated world, and tends to remake and to integrate with itself any single element, or any few elements, which have been reformed by themselves, and are therefore out of harmony with the existing pattern as a whole.

Purposive community fellowships must realize their philosophies in all of their affairs, including education, religion, economics, government, esthetics, recreation and other elements. To seek to make a significant departure in any single phase of the common life, while retaining the old pattern unchanged as to the rest, may be like trying to build an airplane by attaching a propeller to the components of an automobile. Each element of society is conditioned and formed out of its association with all the rest. To alter only one or a few elements may be to create an inharmonious anachronism. Of course pioneering endeavor is deeply influenced by the surrounding world. But pioneering communities and cultures of great vigor have the power to resist absorption, and in the process of being included in the whole pattern of life, to change that total pattern, perhaps more than they are changed. For instance, the scientific attitude and method have remained relatively uncorrupted and are profoundly changing general life outlook. The Christian ethic as realized in many communities repeatedly reasserts itself and affects total life outlook.

Because mankind is an interdependent whole, minority developments cannot and must not seek to be isolated or self-centered in relation to society as a whole. But to perform their function they should in some degree be "in the world but not of it." Building better relationships with the wider world should be a major phase of pioneering community endeavor. Such communities are like grown children in a family, products of the wider world, associated with it, yet seeking to advance beyond what previous generations had achieved.

From the standpoint of the larger society such community pioneering should be recognized as necessary, for apart from the advances made by smaller groups in working out new patterns, society as a whole will become rigid and senile, and there may be no alternatives but totalitarian movements and general decay. No one ideology, culture, religion or technology can to any significant degree encompass or pioneer the major new developments that are going to take place in American and world society. Variety and creative individuality both of individuals and of communities is intrinsic to nature and to human life, and is its wealth and hope. Purposeful fellowships, as diverse as human life, can each contribute elements necessary to the whole.

A new tradition for society is necessary. That new wine must be put in new bottles. Yet during that process the established social order must

live on, be maintained, labored with, refined, and improved. The established order of itself cannot turn itself into a new one. There must be a sort of succession of generations. The new must grow up in the midst of the old. try itself out, prove its value and purge itself of mistakes, and survive if it is worthy of survival. Then, when that worth is established, it can without violence infuse and displace the old. We may build those values, if we will, in our new fellowships and communities, and fellowships of communities, as we cannot in the deepseated habit patterns and the complex of institutional rigidities of the established social order.

Every group and community can seek to be an "intentional community" in this sense. The realization of these purposes will come to a significant extent from established communities which rise to the challenge, inspired by the examples of other communities, or by concerned, creative citizenship. Yet this process too requires the pioneering of small groups of people banded together to refine and strengthen their lives, and to enlarge each other's vision and practice of citizenship.

Such a way of dealing with national and world problems in our own immediate lives and associations certainly is not the whole answer to present-day problems. However, it is the most neglected approach. In our present culture small organic social groups and communities have been discounted, with preference for mass action. Those who choose mass action usually cut their own community roots and put their emphasis on political and relatively impersonal approaches. It is our contention that the big-scale "gesellschaft" approach, that is not well-proportioned and is not founded on the small-scale "gemeinschaft" community, may be not only futile, but harmful.

There is value and benefit from disregarding and discarding the narrow, self-centered small community relationship of the past. However, if we wait too long before replacing that old foundation of society with something more vital and more appropriate to the needs of today and tomorrow, modern civilization may crumble by its own senescence without an adequate successor, quite regardless of the hazards of world wars with their unprecedented agents of destruction. World wars may be chiefly symptoms of that progressive senility.

In the field of community, present preoccupation with methods and devices of organization may distract our attention from more fundamental needs and more productive effort. The chief source of our weakness is our preoccupation with extending our domain over others and over nature to such an extent that we fail to guard and advance our domain over ourselves, individually, in fellowship and in mutual action. That dominion cannot be transmitted wholesale by legislature, pulpit, radio or school. Our strength must be built in the attitude and practice of our own lives.

A GLANCE AT THE "COMMUNITIES OF WORK"

Periodicals published by organizations of intentional communities give evidence of the growing vitality and maturity of this world-wide movement. This is particularly true of the largest and best established, the French "Entente Communautaire." The Jan.-Feb. issue of their periodical, *Communauté*, is a 92-page illustrated account of eight well-established communities, five new ones, the Paris and national federations, and the "Castors" (beavers), or self-help cooperative housing groups. We give below a brief resume of highlights from articles in the March-April issue:

Program for the General Assembly to be held June 12-13 in Paris: Discussions on human relations in the Communities and on relations with working-class society; reports of activities of central office, meetings of committees, constitutional amendments.

The Magnificent Example of "L'Habitat." Headquarters of this group of construction workers at Lyons were destroyed by fire in February. Extracts from the community's newspaper describes how the crisis was met so that work could continue almost immediately, thanks to unremitting labor on the part of the members, and to aid in cash and in kind from about twenty other Communities of Work.

News of Communities. Boimondau: "The first of our Communities continues to set the example of a splendid vitality. The month of March saw it break all its production records: 63,000 watchcases left the shop. . . . The sports committee has . . . utilized a large field surrounding the shop, for a stadium . . . with tennis, three volleyball and two basketball courts, a football field, track for footracing, bowling alleys."

S.G.T.M.F., Paris: Community conducting underwater operations. "After a very difficult period during which the group was organized and gathered the necessary equipment, it now seems that the hardest tasks have been accomplished. The Chief has just returned from the Gulf of Mexico, where he did some very interesting work taking submarine pictures of the life of shrimps. . . . He accepted assignments which foreign divers shrank from."

S.C.O.C.E.M., Roubaix: "The newest of the communitarian groups, having begun its official existence the first of April. Its seven members do carpentry and cabinet work. They have already formulated their rules, which define relations between the Community and its members."

Bureau d'Etudes Communautaires. (A research office, studying the history of cooperation and cooperative communities, giving assistance to such groups, and collecting a library on these subjects. It was launched recently as a result of collaboration of Henrik Infield, of the (American)

Group Farming Research Institute, and Henri Desroche, who is in charge of the Bureau, and is one of the editors of *Communauté*.)

Federation of Paris Communities: Unites some eight or ten communities in or near Paris. Executive Committee meets once a month, as do the heads of member communities. Present chief interests in study of human relations in the Communities and of better economic organization, sponsoring T.W.I.—Training Within Industry—sessions in each community.

Community Newspapers. "Some of our Communities have their own bulletins. We cannot emphasize strongly enough the primary role of these organs." Summaries are given, showing the great diversity of subjects: sports, civic life, problems of production and marketing, social organization in the Community, cultural interests, politics, relation with outside, children's activities and observations.

Organization of the Cité Horlogère at Valence. This group of four communities, offspring of the Boimondau community, is making a thorough study and revision of its organization, and a 16-page section of the resultant outline, dealing with "communitarian organization," is reprinted. "This organization must adapt to modern industrial evolution, obtain economic security by a variety of activities and by solidarity between Communities, but at the same time be democratic and human, permitting each Community to develop without harming the harmony and balance of the *Cité*. . . . It must be an organization on the human scale, avoiding the gigantic size of great industrial ensembles and all the attendant faults—administrative routine, depersonalization, loss of sense of responsibility. The *Cité Horlogère* will be composed of Communities not exceeding 80 to 100 productive persons, so that all the persons working in a Community may know and understand each other well."

BALANCING COLLECTIVISM AND INDIVIDUALISM IN COMMUNITY

By WENDELL B. KRAMER*

A central concern of American intentional communities today seems to be at the point of finding the happy balance in degree of each of the component parts necessary to secure the full expression of community. Among the several areas of interest going to make up community, the one which seems to touch off more emotional warmth, thus indicating its closeness to the nerve center of community, is that of giving proper value to each factor in the individual-group set of relationships. This is the decision reached from visiting thirty-five different intentional communities.

*Reprinted from *Newsletter* of the Fellowship of Intentional Communities, January 15, 1954.

Can the full values of community be attained without eliminating the self-expression of the individuals involved? This is a frequent question heard throughout the communities. Then comes the counter question, which seems just about as frequent: Can we gain the fullest possible values of community if we do eliminate the self-expression of the individuals making up a community?

Those who favor the total communal way insist that individual expression cuts across community, making it unachievable. Many of those who believe that American freedom has planted into the world a new expression, both for good and ill, believe that in it lies a priceless factor. They point out that this priceless contribution builds for creativity, and is absolutely essential either for human advance or even for merely developing a continuing leadership, capable of perpetuating the fact of community.

The pattern of intentional community, established in Europe three to four hundred years ago quite completely communal in form, and largely characterizing the type of intentional community which has been most successful in the various parts of the world up to the present century, now is found facing a new form of intentional community. This newer type is in very small units, is much less imposing, and is highly varied in its patterns of expression. Still it is fairly consistent in asking the question: Can individual freedom of thought and expression be maintained, without losing the factor of solidarity of community for which these groups are striving?

Of course it is evident that this principle applies only to the items which are related just to the individual. Cooperative production without cooperative control wouldn't be full cooperation. And surely, cooperative control is enhanced by cooperative ownership. But is it necessary to remove the moral experiences of decision, and even of possession, from the individual altogether in order to achieve a sense of community? If we do, we throw away some of life's richest blessings, such as the joy of sacrificial sharing with and for others, and the wide variety of individual expression, which seems inherent in the plan of creation and out of which comes human progress.

Cannot even these aspects of life be brought into full harmony of community through voluntary responses of the community members? Several groups believe they have discovered ways of accomplishing this end. It is true that none would claim hundred-per-cent effectiveness. Neither has the fully communal plan yielded hundred-per-cent effectiveness. Also it creates added problems of its own.

As yet it is too soon to judge final outcomes and values of intentional communities. Another generation or two may help in this evaluation. In the meantime much more experimentation is needed, and an ever-continuing fellowship of all communities seeking the goal of universal brotherhood.

PILOT PLANTS, UTOPIAS, AND SOCIAL REFORM

By LOUIS FILLER

A first draft of this paper was presented at a Newberry Library Conference in American Studies, March 21, 1953, in response to one by Professor A. E. Bestor, Jr., entitled "Patent-Office Models of the Good Society: Some Relationships between Social Reform and Westward Expansion," published in the American Historical Review, Vol. LVIII, No. 3, April 1953.

Ideas of social reform, and definitions of elements which enter into social reform, are more than pawns in an academic game. They carry striking force with them, and can affect operations calculated to advance or retard ■ social good. There are numerous persons who feel duty-bound to be "practical," who derive small satisfaction from their efforts, and have little conviction that they are acting with dignity and purpose. They lack faith that their more vital ambitions and better intentions can be made meaningful. In effect, they lack faith that their associates—to say nothing of their underlings or superiors—can be their co-workers, in any genuine sense. Half-heartedly, they put their trust in bureaucratic institutions and regulations. Cooperation seems to them a pious dream.

But is it? Has it been? These are questions of fact and of interpretation. An individual may be soured on social endeavor, thanks to a faulty interpretation, an infirm grasp of the facts. It may well be that our social relations here at home, as well as our relations with the world, may be fundamentally determined by our understanding of our own potential, as citizens and as world-citizens. If we think that peace and cooperative enterprise are utopian, then very likely they will be utopian. If we think that individual integrity cannot survive under present-day conditions, then individual integrity will not survive. The problem, for those who are dissatisfied with such a perspective, is that the "facts" seem to contradict hope: "utopias" inevitably fail; the world has grown too large and complex for them. But has it?

A. E. Bestor, Jr., in his article, "Patent-Office Models of the Good Society," in effect claims, if I understand him, that early American communitarianism, while not a product of frontier conditions, utilized the frontier for its own purposes; that "patent-office" reforms in the form of communitarian enterprises, such as the Owenite and Fourierite colonies, could flourish and be taken seriously, so long as frontier circumstances made them as feasible as any other plan for living; but that they largely ceased to be significant, and became mere escape mechanisms—apparently not much more significant than what are termed "utopias"—under post-Civil War conditions of a matured capitalism. Under such new conditions, according to Mr. Bestor, one could either hope to modify its effects by attacking one or more of its causes—currency difficulties, trusts, taxation

inequities, or what-not—or formulate a program of complete revolution which would, in Marx's words, result in the overthrow of all existing capitalist conditions. One could not longer compete with prevailing social modes by juxtaposing to them "patent-office" reform societies.

Assuming that I have put the case adequately, there are two questions which particularly interest me: One, whether this contrast between pre-Civil War and post-Civil War reform programs fully describes their evolution; and, Two, what the implications for reform may be in the process involved. There is, in addition, the matter of the frontier, to which reference will be made.

I would like to summon into this discussion the work of a person who would seem most relevant to it; and I believe that I do so with proper disinterestedness. Mr. Arthur E. Morgan is no longer president of Antioch College; and my interest in his career and ideas has preceded my association with that institution. Furthermore, I am no devotee of the small community, which engages his attention, though I am not opposed to it, in any serious sense. Mr. Bestor, in his *Backwoods Utopias*, believes that one of Mr. Morgan's books, *Nowhere Was Somewhere*, represents the height of subjective interpretation; but it seems proper to note that Mr. Morgan cannot be summed up so easily as this. Mr. Morgan has not merely written history, which can be criticized for form, references, and adequate statement, as though it were a doctoral dissertation; he has made considerable history of his own, and requires comprehension on his own terms.

Mr. Bestor distinguishes pre-Civil War community experiments from post-Civil War "utopias," taking the traditional view of the word; that is, he assumes it refers to plans which can never materialize. Mr. Morgan, in his extremely interesting book, asserts the opposite: a utopia, to him, refers to a combination of various social features which for the most part had previously existed, somewhere, in some form.* He cites a variety of evidence, some of it very controversial indeed, to substantiate his view. His most brilliant, most thought-provoking formulation deals with More's *Utopia* itself, which he believes to be no story at all, but, in part at least, a transcription of an actual conversation with a person who had been part of one of the very early post-Columbian expeditions to South America. As is well known, More's *Utopia* was published some years before the official discovery of Peru, yet contains features which are exact statements of Peruvian customs and civilization. I will say no more of this work here, except to point

*Professor Bestor argued, in answer to this statement, that Mr. Morgan was involved in a contradiction; if utopian ideas derived from past experience, then it would not be possible to project novel ideas. This would seem comparable to believing that new words cannot be created from an old alphabet.

out that Mr. Morgan is a social engineer, and, as such, has studied societal permutations in order to consider ways of living which might be used today and tomorrow. Whether Owenite communities were indeed, as Mr. Bestor believes, practical or possible in their time—whether they were more so than any others, or than the plans of Bellamy and George—and, particularly, whether anything of their experience can serve us today—needs to be weighed in evaluating the theory or practice of either pre- or post-Civil War reform systems.

Now let me center on the question of whether, to quote Mr. Bestor, "for most American reformers in an industrialized age, communitarianism"—which Mr. Bestor equates with what he terms small-scale pilot plants—"was a tool that had lost its edge, probably forever." What are the grounds for such an assertion? Bellamy himself believed that Fourierite communities had outlived their purpose, and could only, in post-Civil War times, be a brake on progressive movements such as he assumed his own to be: movements which opposed the over-all social system, rather than attempted to set it examples, in miniature, of a more adequate system. Many American colonies of his time and later were palpably escapist—though not, it should be emphasized, all of them.

But is virgin territory a prerequisite to the theory or effort of planting a radically new society, as Mr. Bestor asserts? What shall we say of L'Entente Communautaire, which had its beginnings at Valence in 1941, in the Boimondau community? "Ni capitalisme, ni phalanstere," they maintained. This idea has become, since 1946, a federation of over fifty communitarian groups—over 15 in the Paris area alone—called Communities of Work, and taking in from 10 to 200 participants. It boasts a range of social organizations, representatives of various tendencies, political, religious, and otherwise: and a multitude of enterprises, on and off the land. Particularly impressive is its emphasis upon psychological, and what one might call spiritual factors, as well as upon the economic. It operates through an unpretentious administrative setup having most interesting, as well as evidently practical features. There is hardly space to describe this important chain of communitarian establishments, except to observe that it has, in cases, transformed—as they call it—traditional capitalist establishments in terms of their objectives, and that similar institutions have sprung up in the hardly virgin areas of northern Italy, Switzerland, Belgium, and Holland. The story is told in the publications of L'Entente Communautaire, and in Claire Huchet Bishop's *All Things Common* (Harper, 1950).

Mr. Bestor presents evidence that communitarian thought in America was stimulated by the existence of virgin areas in which any social system might conceivably triumph. The implications of his researches must be qualified by the fact that some of the colonies were erected in the east,

amid conditions of social stability and powerful political and economic interests not markedly different in kind from those confronting post-Civil War times. Aside from that, was the idea of pilot plants *passé*—of plants which could increase in number, with expectations of changing the shape or nature of the prevailing social order? And here it is very appropriate for Mr. Bestor to have cited Horace Mann's "official Farewell" to the school system of Massachusetts, with his apostrophe to futurity and the West, and his demand for "a different mental and moral culture [which] must come speedily, or it will come too late." For his successor, Mr. Morgan, was interested in pilot plants, and believed—contrary to Mr. Bestor's formulation—that a pilot plant was *not* a "patent-office" model, but what it is known to be everywhere in business and technology: *not* something merely ready for patenting, which may or may not be workable, or even in the right direction—but the small-scale operation of a process to determine its validity and to perfect it; and subject, therefore, to criticism, experimentation, and change.

Mr. Morgan, therefore, built Antioch College, which served as a pilot plant in the field of education; and he is now president of Community Service, Inc., which is interested in nothing so much as the small community. It acts as consultant to people in cities, towns, and organizations, encouraging them in design of living, in terms of their private initiative and local enterprise. Mr. Morgan would hardly grant that small-scale pilot plants were "a tool that had lost its edge, perhaps forever." He could not conceive of any social plan being put, so to speak, into production without the use of pilot plants.

The point is that Mr. Morgan does not see communitarian systems as sharply distinguished from "utopian" writings or programs, or pre-Civil War conditions as drastically other than those which faced us after the war. To him, all previous experiments are pilot plants which can be studied for weaknesses and workable devices which may be considered in connection with new experiments and enterprises. Let me quote a passage from Mr. Morgan's *The Small Community*, to illustrate his point of view:

Many American undertakings to create new communities have been tragedies because they lacked a spirit of inclusiveness and a sense of good proportion. Brook Farm had only dreams and transcendental theories. It had no economic roots. Its members lacked patience, steadiness of purpose, and self-discipline. Fairhope had little more than single-tax and a good climate. New Harmony depended unduly on a theory of social organization. . . . Kingsport, Tennessee, was an effort to add to the quality of living by creating an industrial community with employees continuing to live on surrounding farms. . . . Sometimes industrial men built model towns, such as Kohler, Wisconsin, but often their ideas went little further than provision

for physical conveniences and architectural design, and too often the creators of these paternalistic communities were made bitter by the ensuing "in-gratitude."

Mr. Morgan also has occasion to discuss Gary, Indiana, Pullman, Illinois, and other efforts. In his latest work, *Industries for Small Communities* (Yellow Springs, 1953), he cites the over two dozen local undertakings of Yellow Springs, involving some millions of dollars, and a considerable amount of individual initiative, ingenuity, and unusual managerial-employee relationships, as constituting a kind of "pilot plant" for other communities to study. He is impressed less by the mere idealism or by the mere economic validity of a given venture than by the balance of factors which can make for a more rounded existence, a more free society. Yellow Springs, which once housed an Owenite community, a century and a quarter ago, has now, as it happens, a cohesiveness and variety which distinguishes it from numerous small towns and college towns. But the idea of a small town which fosters individuality and resists monopoly is one which can be pressed on many grounds, if only the ground that small business seems to offer a higher profit than big business, taken all in all.

Such considerations might appear to distinguish the "pilot plant" as here described from the apparently more radical "pilot plant" of the 1820-1860 period. One does not have to ignore the picturesque aspects of the earlier social experiments to observe that they were middle-class responses to capitalist developments, and, though apparently far removed from capitalism in aim and methods, were less calculated to undermine capitalism than to furnish it with rejuvenating experiences and ideas. Paradoxical though it may seem, they were not opposed to free enterprise or individualism, but, as I have had occasion to observe in a study of Bellamy, were calculated to defend the humane outposts of individualism. Though more concretized than Bellamy's program could be, the phalanxes were not more effective: Bellamy's utopia, after all, did more than (to quote Mr. Bestor) "draw a picture"; without a "working model," it became the means for writing the nationalizing planks into the Populist Platform. And the decentralizing efforts of those who, today, with "working models" of various sorts, urge emphasis on the small community, also involve a "belief in the plasticity of social institutions," and may well help to balance the injudicious aspects of an over-concentrated society.

The virgin areas of our frontier are indeed no more, and can to that extent no longer call forth traits of energy and imaginativeness elsewhere. But if the frontier is also a state of mind—an exploration of possibilities, as well as resources—it can continue to stimulate attitudes and experiments in a manner which constitutes a living link with communitarianism and utopianism as here observed.

COMMUNITY IN WEST AFRICA

by ARTHUR E. MORGAN

The West African village has preserved to the present what in pre-historic times must have been the nearly universal structure of human society.* The village is not just a collection of people. It is a social organism. A single, well-understood pattern of life prevails. Customs and standards pass from generation to generation. There is general unity and uniformity of belief and attitude. Moral codes are quite strictly and effectively enforced, not so much by formally enacted laws as by the spirit and common understanding of the village or the tribe. There is general agreement among both Europeans and Africans that manners and morals are better lived up to in the primitive villages than among Europeanized Africans (Americans are included among Europeans). This is true even where the education and Europeanization has been in mission schools.

In going through the back country one sees the circle of stones around a shade tree where the elders sit to consider the problems of the community. The pattern of social structure represented by this circle existed in Britain two thousand years ago. The last vestiges disappeared from Denmark only a century or so ago. It extended across Europe and Asia to Japan, and formerly was nearly universal in India. It is probable that this form of social organization lasted longer over the world than any other type of local government. It tended to fade away, not because it ceased to be useful (where it survived, as in Switzerland, it proved useful), but because as self-government it was opposed by centralized power.

The traditional village and tribal pattern of Africa contains much that is invaluable to social welfare, but also includes undesirable elements such as witchcraft and taboos. It was the opinion of General Jan Smuts of South Africa, and of various other observers of African life, that this kind of village and tribal organization has great inherent values from which the whole world could benefit. There has been some inclination on the part of British colonial administration to encourage its continuation in West Africa. In the Gold Coast there were more than a hundred independent tribes or nations. Under the British government these were somewhat coordinated by regional councils or chiefs and an over-all council of head chiefs. In this way the traditional village structure was being somewhat perpetuated and organized.

*"Folk life, in contrast to civilized life, is one style of life, in spite of the very great specific cultural differences among precivilized or primitive societies."—Robert Redfield, *Primitive Society and Its Transformations* (Cornell University Press, 1953, \$3.50).

The Europeanized element of the population has been quite separate from native culture. It is sometimes said that the persons who are most highly regarded by the Europeanized element of the population are those who have "bintu," that is, have "been to" England or the United States. With a number of important exceptions, the fully Europeanized West African, whether educated in England or in missionary or other English-speaking schools, tends to lose contact with the old tribal structure. To him, authentic value came from the west, and he wants to forget his native background.

There tend therefore to exist two cultures side by side, which contribute very little to each other. When the village and tribal structures break they tend to disintegrate quite completely, so far as the Europeanized African is concerned. The two worlds seem almost as separate as though one were in Africa and the other in England. Of course each infects and colors the other in some degree, but that degree seems to be slight. What we see is a competition of cultures, with the European generally disrupting and displacing the African.* In some areas this process seems to have gone too far to be stopped. In other areas and in some tribes there is considerable toughness and persistence of tradition and structure, and if a clear purpose and picture were present of a fusion of the best of western culture with that of native Africa, it would not be too late to bring it about. Some Europeanized Africans see this in a vague way, and are enthusiastic about the revival of native music and crafts. Even this enthusiasm, however, is largely a reflection of European attitudes. Essentially there is an unimaginative competition of strikingly different cultures, rather than an approach to a creative synthesis.

Here we have a great social tragedy. Two cultures, each with priceless values, exist side by side. Should the values of each be fully appreciated, and should there be an informed purpose of evolving a culture *fit for the days that are to come*, using the best of both, or adding quite new elements as the possibilities should direct, the present transition might be a way to a future better than the past of either.

At present a third type of social organization, that of Soviet Russia, enters the picture. Here as in the other cases, there is a competition between

*"In this world-wide western offensive against the rear-guard of primitive societies, extermination or eviction or subjugation has been the rule and conversion the exception." Arnold Toynbee in *The Study of History*.

Robert Redfield observes of this conflict: "The relations between city and country form a major separation, a principal frontier of human relations. . . . There is at best an uneasy peace on the moral frontier between city and country."—*op. cit.*

cultures rather than a search for the best in each, with perhaps creation of new elements. It is reliably reported from China that the Communist regime is consciously determined to destroy the existing local and village structure, so that total loyalty shall be given to the imposed pattern. Probably the same tends to be true in West Africa.

Even the best prevailing patterns of social organization have inherited defects which threaten the welfare of present-day society, and that of the decades to come. In programs of community development in America as well as elsewhere there is needed a spirit and a process of exploration and of inquiry which not only will fulfill the possibilities of our existing social patterns, but will examine them and will recreate them to meet the needs of the future. In this respect the general lack of creativeness in dealing with local social organization in West Africa is a striking example of our own shortcomings in the promotion of adequate patterns and spirit for our community life.

* * * *

While American and European society are exporting to Africa, India and South America the dominant culture of the West, the needed synthesis of values is not present in any of this cultural export. Both the dominant urban and the native community cultural values have been coexisting in America and in Europe awaiting the synthesis which has scarcely been attempted. In America the Mexican, European peasant, American Indian, and Southern Highlands culture, and in Europe the native cultures of many a hinterland region of France, Spain, Scotland, Scandinavia or Switzerland, all have awaited effective recognition, all have been exploited and regarded only as picturesque. There has been general failure to unite cultures on a basis of mutual respect. Western culture is sick for the lack of elements that are strong in these others. Will it be necessary for Western culture to have largely destroyed itself before it is humbled enough to recognize and creatively cross-fertilize with the native cultural values?

But such cross-fertilization cannot take place within the framework of either urban or folk cultures. Each is too limited, self-centered and culture-bound. Can an orthodox Christian missionary find deep common ground with Burmese Buddhism or with the Hopi? The same obstacle exists with regard to people occupied in technology, economics and social organization.

To achieve a synthesis of cultural values it is necessary to realize in practice a greater common value which gives these values sound recognition within a larger and more adequate pattern. In the past a few isolated persons have sensed this larger world of values. T. E. Lawrence sensed it in relation to the Arabs, D. H. Lawrence with the Pueblo Indians, Fielding Hall was aware of it in Burma, Stefansson realized the larger framework of values

in his association with the Eskimos. What is needed is something more—the creative synthesis of groups of people committed to bring that new more universal framework of values into expression in community living. Gandhigram and Sevagram have this purpose in mind for India, the Communities of Work have it for France. If America is to serve Africa and Asia we need to work out such a synthesis here at home. Today such an endeavor is almost the opposite from the prevailing emphasis. Hence the pressing need to work it out in practice.

REVIEWS

Not all the literature of sociology is recorded in books on the subject. One who ranges in his reading will find light thrown on most interesting places. Martin Flavin, author of novels and many plays, also found time to write a book on Africa, *Black and White, From the Cape to the Congo* (New York, Harper, 1950, 332 pages. \$4.00).

Over the world men are worrying about overpopulation. What is to be done as the increasing hordes of humanity outrun the food supply? But there is a different story in the Belgian Congo, an area a third as large as the United States, but with only a third as many persons to the square mile, as in even our thinly settled country. The region is rich in natural resources, and the Belgian owners need more labor.

As is the case with many primitive people, the natives of the Congo in their natural setting have ways of limiting the population. One of the reputedly effective methods is long-time nursing of children—in some cultures but one element of a larger pattern of population control. It is a common belief that a woman seldom becomes pregnant while nursing her baby, and if nursing is continued for two or three years, which was the primitive custom, the number of children was naturally limited. In the mining settlements, to overcome this habit, the company nurses give each baby supplementary feeding of milk and tapioca each day. "It gets them off their mothers' breasts." "They'd be nursing for years if they were let alone".

There has been vast improvement in the administration of the Belgian Congo during the past generation, with humane treatment, modern towns, sanitation and education. Yet even so the change is not wholly delightful. The village life was far from the crude affair it has been pictured. Jan Smuts of South Africa felt that this ancient communal structure was a precious inheritance through which Africa could make a great contribution to the world. The native has kept his population within bounds, and his

wants few, which might be considered social wisdom. But this course does not serve the white man's purposes.

Life is a seamless fabric. In order that we may have gold to bury in a hole in Kentucky, black men must work in a hole in the ground in the Belgian Congo. In order that they may have incentive to work, their ancient social structure must be disrupted, their relatively high, if primitive, ethical standards must give way to the desocializing life of the mining town with its drunkenness and prostitution, though in a highly ethical, sanitary and benignly paternalistic administration.

Business, religion, ethics, sociology, politics—all are involved. When any single factor sees itself as primary, whether it be business, politics or religion, the results are apt to be less than ideal. For instance, Flavin writes of religion in the Belgian Congo:

The native "must have a new religion. The old one of his fathers—a very good one, too, simple and direct—will no longer serve his purpose, or be allowed to do so. He must adopt the white man's God. And here is an added hurdle in this matter, for the white men are not agreed about their God; and so he is confronted with several different versions, each alleged by its adherents to be final and authentic. There is rivalry among the Christian creeds for the lost black souls; and they steal each other's thunder and persuade communicants out of one sect to another, by promises and threats of ultimate reward or eternal punishment—indeed by more realistic methods such as bribery and coercion."

Just as in America competing business and competing religion tend to disrupt and destroy the community, so when our culture moves to other lands that process continues. It is doubtful whether such difficulties will be removed by United Nations Constitutions or by charters of civil rights. Only as there is general liberation, refinement and strengthening of mind and spirit will conditions improve. The quality of action with respect to community by those in authority will reflect the quality and character of their own personalities.

"Finally, the primitive man is deficient in his wants, shockingly destitute in fact: if he be housed and fed, and underfed at that, he is satisfied and happy, there is nothing else he needs. Why should he climb a tree, or labor like an ox, or burrow in a mine? He simply has no wants, of the kind that can be gratified by money. So his wants must be expanded. And that takes education. He must be weaned away from his tribal loyalties and his communal life, from all the deepest habits of his past; he must be enrolled in a competitive society, in which the only purpose is to get ahead and stay there—entered in a race to outwork or outsmart his fellow men. He must be made to want things, and a lot of them. Only then will the

mines produce their proper quota and the oil nuts multiply."

We were told by mine operators in the Gold Coast that the most powerful incentive from African labor is the prospect of leisure. The African will work hard if his work will buy time when he need not work. We might further encourage that trait by sending him advertisements from American magazines which picture the happy possessor of an insurance endowment policy, retiring at fifty to spend his days at a resort hotel with his feet on the porch railing. It might be effective to build some resort hotels in Africa and employ retired persons to sit on the porch with their feet on the railing. Example is powerful.

One wonders whether it might not be possible for a transition to be made from the old ways of the primitive village to a new way of physical health, freedom from taboos and superstitions and unwholesome practices, and a wider world of culture and interests, without the destruction of the essence of the native culture. As it is, the destruction of the native social structure, even under the benign paternalism which has displaced the old brutality, is followed by breakdown of ethical standards and elements of fineness which were the results of many centuries of social evolution.

As we go from the Belgian Congo to Belgium itself we find economic motives working in the same way under very different conditions. Belgium, with about 740 persons to the square mile, has a population 12 times as dense as that of the United States, and denser even than the population of India or China or Japan. Yet to compete with the industries of other countries Belgian industrialists need an abundance of cheap labor. Before the Second World War we saw on the walls of Belgian factories bulletins pleading for the people to be loyal to their country by having more children. "Abundance of labor" had held wages at near a low subsistence level, and there was a strong desire among industrialists to keep them there. Both in Belgium and the Congo these pleas are supported by the Catholic Church.

This case study of the Belgian Congo is supporting evidence of the thesis that the population controls of stable peoples in the past were not limited to war, disease and starvation, but were based upon standards maintained within the culture of the community. *Community Service News* has printed much evidence to this effect. It is here apparent that the Belgian colonial authorities are trying to duplicate among the natives of Africa the very conditions of the industrial revolution in Europe and India which triggered the tremendous increase in birth rate that led Malthus to his theory of population. Human society has not always been intrinsically the blind breeding machine which some demographers have assumed, but in many cultures has achieved balance under the social controls of stable community relationships.

—ARTHUR E. MORGAN

The Life of Frédéric Le Play, by Dorothy Herbertson (Le Play House Press, Ledbury, Herefordshire, England, 1950, 120 pages, 12s 6d).

This is the first biography in English of the great French engineer and sociologist (1806-1882) who might have claim to the title of father of modern social science. The biography was completed some time in the late nineteenth century by Mrs. Herbertson with the aid of her husband, who was professor of geography at Oxford, and a devoted student of Le Play. Then for more than half a century the manuscript met with a series of exigencies, which finally ended with its publication, both as Section 2, Volume XXXVIII (1950) of the *Sociological Review*, and also in book form.

As one of the foremost engineers and mineralogists of Europe, Le Play was called upon for studies of the mineral resources of Spain, of the Donetz coal basin in Russia, and of the mineral resources in between.

"When he started to visit the mining centers of North Germany it never occurred to him to restrict his observation merely to technical details, and thus it came about that he saw not merely mines but miners. He began to classify and explain industrial populations in precisely the way he was accustomed to in classifying industrial methods and processes. But he was something more than a mining expert; he was and had long been a naturalist. The societies which he proposed to study appeared to him, not as wheels of a vast machine, but as living, working families. About them he asked the same questions as he would have asked about bird or animal. 'How do they live?' 'What do they eat and drink?' 'What do they do?' In attempting to answer these questions and others like them he was led to that minute and detailed study of the working classes which was afterward embodied in his great series of monographs on the working classes of Europe."

Le Play's early life provided an excellent background for fundamental social studies. A child of a poor fishing family on the Normandy coast, during the British blockade of the fishing fleet, it was his work as a boy to supplement the family larder by wild fruit or game, or fish caught along the shore. His father died when he was five, and he was taken to live with a well-to-do uncle in Paris. His urban school was unproductive:

Forty children were shut up for seven hours a day in one close room. . . . The little prisoner, who had been so quick to learn the country lore when he had something real to do and a good reason for doing it . . . learned nothing worth while at this wretched school.

However, his uncle was an educated man, and the home was a gathering place for members of the old regime who had escaped the rigors of the Revolution. From then on Le Play's life was a succession of contrasting and varied experiences which helped to give range to his thinking.

For a "wanderjahre" Le Play and a fellow student spent seven months on a walking tour, visiting mines and geological formations of interest, chiefly in northern Germany. They walked 4000 miles, making intimate acquaintance with working people and also seeking the acquaintance of outstanding personalities wherever they went. While their professional interest was mineralogy, they were only slightly less interested in social phenomena, and arrived at certain fundamental conclusions concerning the social sciences.

They were convinced . . . that the study of social science, like the study of every other science which aims at precision of data, must be based on observation. In this faith Le Play never wavered. "The conclusion to which I came," he writes, "was that this science, like those taught in the curriculum of our science schools, must be based, not on *a priori* conceptions, but on the methodical observation of facts and on the inductions of a rigorous logic. I began to seek the laws of social science in the knowledge of social facts." . . . "Social science," he wrote, "can be based on surer foundations than history, for all the ages of the social world are actually alive for us at the present time." . . . "Travel is to the science of societies what chemical analysis is to mineralogy."

He vowed that he would spend six months of each year in travel, and for many years maintained that practice.

In the Donetz Basin in Russia he found a human culture which had not changed since the days of Abraham, and such cases justified his statement that the stuff of human history and prehistory still lives and waits for our observation.

Le Play believed that Rousseau, by his habit of assertions and assumptions based on his imagination rather than upon first-hand observation, had done great harm and had misled France and Europe. Since Le Play had developed his general viewpoint by 1830, he stands as one of the pioneers in modern social science.

For twenty years he worked as a metallurgist, with social science as an active avocation. Then he definitely gave up the chair of metallurgy at the Ecole des Mines, and the editorship of *Annales des Mines*, and gave his entire time to sociology. This step was hastened by the urgent requests of those who were trying to stabilize French life and industry after the disturbances of the commune, and the fiasco of Louis Blanc's "national workshops."

In seeking for a fundamental social unit for exact study Le Play settled upon the working man's family. He published six monographs on this subject: first, a general introduction; second, the family budgets of workers

in stable societies, governed by tradition; third, of societies governed by a mixture of tradition and innovation; fourth, of societies faithful to tradition in the face of innovation; fifth, of disintegrating societies attacked by innovation and forgetful of innovation; and sixth, of societies disorganized by the spirit of innovation, contemptuous of tradition, and in rebellion against moral law and paternal authority. For instance, the monographs dealing with peoples "guided by a just mixture of tradition and innovation" describe the family budgets of:

- (1) An iron worker of Dannemora.
- (2) A foundry worker of Buskerud.
- (3) A miner of the Hartz.
- (4) A gunsmith of Solingen.
- (5) A fisher of Marken.
- (6) A cutler of Sheffield.
- (7) A cutler of London.
- (8) A carpenter of Sheffield.
- (9) A foundry worker of Derbyshire.

Le Play was a pioneer in social ecology. He believed that character and custom are largely the outcome of environment. The pastoral people of the Russian steppes in their nomad life develop paternal group organization. Paternal dictatorship does not lay the basis for sound civil government. Shepherd people's conquests are short-lived. The northern fishing peoples fished in small boats with crews of about three men, which compelled decentralization of authority. Also, while the men were away it was necessary to delegate authority to the judge, the pastor and the keeper of order, and to the mother at home. Thus administrative organization developed. This is the reason, Le Play believed, why the North European peoples have so deeply influenced the world with their superior methods of government.

Le Play based his social thinking on actual first-hand data, and he made himself master of the data as perhaps no other man of his time. Yet he did not hesitate to generalize from that data as in the conclusions just mentioned. Possession of data does not insure accurate generalization, and Le Play may sometimes have allowed the impulse to generalize to carry him too far.

The principles of social inquiry developed by Le Play have come into general use, often by people who are unaware of their origin. This little biography not only tells of the development of Le Play's ideas, but presents them with a vitality and insight which may contribute to clear understanding of sound social science methods.

MORALE—A CRITICAL WEAKNESS OF URBAN CIVILIZATION

Those who seek to experiment with other forms of social organization than those now dominant are generally accused of being unrealistic. The present form is expected to grow indefinitely. It is instructive to review a disinterested and competent study of the dominant large city and industrial organization of society to gain insight into it.

The imposing report of the Urban Redevelopment Study, *The Future of Cities and Urban Redevelopment*,* has a concluding essay by the Editor, Coleman Woodbury. This essay is a sobering appraisal of the problem of morale of large city populations. It regards that problem as crucial in the question of their survival. In this essay Mr. Woodbury brings together some of the best thought and study on this problem, and his conclusion, while not pessimistic, is decidedly realistic: he points to grave evidence that large cities and industry have yet to prove that they can make themselves fit for human survival. The following quotations from Mr. Woodbury's article give some measure and counterbalance to the common assumption that the basic pattern of modern industrial and urban civilization is established to endure.

All I can hope to do here is to draw off a few findings or hypotheses about human groups and their leadership that seem pertinent to urban communities and to their neighborhood or area subgroups. I propose to sketch these ideas from three areas of study and investigation: industrial relations, group morale, and racial prejudice or ethnic hostility. In none of these areas are the findings conclusive or fully established. Many are based on studies of small samples. Much more work remains to be done on the validity of these hypotheses generally in the areas from which they were drawn as well as, of course, on their reliability in other parts of our society, e.g., urban and neighborhood organizations.

Among the leaders in studying human beings in industrial relations were Elton Mayo and his former associates at Harvard. Their years of work have led to some conclusions and points of emphasis that are significant for our purpose.

Mayo and his colleagues emphasize two requirements of human communities: (1) to supply goods and services, and (2) to maintain a substantial degree of spontaneous cooperation or collaboration among their members.

*University of Chicago Press, 1953, 764 pages, \$9.00. An extensive, statesmanlike and significant study of modern urban society made under the supervision of the Public Administration Clearing House, the American Society of Planning Officials, and the National Association of Housing Officials. Another essay in the book, on local government, by Victor Jones, was reviewed in the previous issue of *C.S. News*.

As they look at history they see wide variations in the degree of effective collaboration or cooperation. They stress that it is so basically important to an industrial society that it must not be left to chance. Further, they conclude that modern industrialism, particularly in this country, "has been immensely successful in respect of material and technical accomplishment, an utter failure as a cooperative system." . . .

One of the keys to our failure is the weakness, amounting often to almost total inability, in communication among most of the important groups and subgroups within our industrial society. Most members of these groups simply cannot and often do not try to understand how the members of others define common situations or arrive at their position in respect to them. This is by no means largely a matter of language or semantics. It runs much more to questions of attitude, ways of perceiving and understanding, and deep-seated differences in the objectives or things that are held to be important—the value and belief systems of various groups. . . .

In general, many students of industrial relations, particularly the Mayo group, are very unhappy about the present position and outlook. A quotation from Mayo makes this clear:

"F. J. Roethlisberger is of the opinion that our industrial civilization of the present is improvidently living on its capital, upon the store of human goodwill and self-abnegation that many centuries of established routines of living have left us. . . . [Were it not for this capital], he claims, 'the unleashed forces of modern technology would spin themselves out to doom and destruction.' . . . No university calls attention to the fact that material provision is only one of the duties of civilization, the other being the maintenance of cooperative living. Of these two duties it may be said that in any society at a given time the neglected factor becomes the more important. This is our situation now; our theory of civilization acts on the assumption that if technical and material advancement is maintained, human cooperation will *somehow* be inevitable.

"Morale, the maintenance of cooperative living, is commonly spoken as an imponderable, an intangible; and these epithets serve to justify the idea that the study of such matters is beneath the notice of the engineer, the economist, the university. . . . The fact is that those who refer to such matters as imponderables are themselves ignorant of methods by which they can systematically set about the task of improving the cooperative morale in a working department, and are irked by any implication that this is a proper duty of the administrator.

"Such men therefore rely upon a confident, or even jolly, manner, upon knowing everyone's first name and using it, upon expedients such as saying 'Good morning' to everyone they meet. And it is these same persons who express contempt for 'sentimental' methods. This, as a substitute for intelligent inquiry and understanding, would be comic in an isolated instance; but, when twentieth-century civilization can, in general, show nothing better, the comic element recedes and tragedy takes its place.

"There is not much time left us; society, within the nation and without it, is breaking down into groups that show an ever-increasing hostility to each other; irrational hates are taking the place of cooperation. This, historically, has been the precursor of downfall for many valiant civilizations."

Mr. Woodbury adds the comment:

It is a revealing commentary on Mayo's critique of our society that so much of both research and general interest in group morale can be traced more or less directly to our nation's part in the two world wars of the past generation.

Mr. Woodbury goes on to point out the inadequacy of current approaches to the problem he outlines. He writes:

The review of urban institutions and problems in this essay has shown something of their range, complexity, and seriousness. I believe it has become apparent that the conventional machinery, ideas, and relationships for dealing with many of these problems are not fully adequate for the task. As a matter of fact, some of them are pitifully inadequate. Among those problems that might well cause more serious concern are the low morale and the scarce and ineffective leadership in most urban communities—particularly the larger ones that most need good leadership and high community morale. Morale, both in urban communities as a whole and in many of their subgroups, is sickly not only because their leadership is poor, but because many of the institutions, customs, and folkways of some groups cut them off from communication with others. Poor morale is just another name for the resulting lack of a feeling of solidarity, of cohesion or community spirit. In this environment problems of physical development, planning, government finance, and metropolitanism continue to grow because no comprehensive, determined attack is made upon them. Further, their continuing growth makes it easier for many individuals and groups to conclude that nothing can be done about them. This conviction lowers morale still further and another vicious circle is started.

Although in many urban centers the process has not gone this far, certainly in relatively few of them has it not begun at all. Quite probably the key, or at least a key, to understanding this process and devising ways and means of stopping or reversing it lies in the broad area of human motivation—the factors in, influences on, and determinants of human behavior or action, the felt needs, wants, desires, and cravings of the vast range and variety of human beings in urban communities. What makes them tick?

Among the studies of human motivation, Mr. Woodbury chose a passage from Robert Lynd's book, *Knowledge for What?*, which has particular relevance to the problem of morale:

"What, then, are these values and cravings of the human personality?

Adequate answer to this question awaits further research by a wide group of specialists, ranging all the way from biochemistry to each of the social sciences, the arts, and the humanities. But life does not wait upon the perfect formulation. One must take one's awareness at each given moment and use it. The following suggestions as to the persistent cravings of human personalities are set down not because these cravings as here stated have been finally proved by science, but because human behavior keeps continually affirming and reaffirming them. . . .

"1. The human personality craves to live not too far from its own physical and emotional tempo and rhythm. While capable of large adjustment in these respects, the personality suffers strain when the institutional demands of the culture cut too coercively across this personally natural tempo and rhythm. . . .

"As a part of this craving to maintain a tempo and rhythm natural to it, the personality craves periods of latency and private recoil during which time, space, and other persons can be taken on its own terms without coercion.

"2. The human personality craves a sense of growth, of realization of personal powers, and it suffers in an environment that denies growth or frustrates it erratically or for reasons other than the similar need for growth in others. . . .

"3. The human personality craves to do things involving the felt sense of fairly immediate meaning. This sense of immediate meaning may derive from the interest in doing an intrinsically interesting new thing, i.e., the exhilaration of 'getting the hang of it'; from the fun of doing something that *is* fun; or from the sense of personal power involved in exercising one's craftsmanship; or even from doing something with a reasonably sure relationship to something else that has great meaning. . . .

"4. The human personality craves physical and psychological security (peace of mind, ability to 'count on' life's continuities, and so on) to the degree that will still leave with the individual control over the options as to when to venture (for the fun of it, for the values involved) into insecurity.

"5. But the human personality is active and cherishes in varying degrees the right to exercise these optional insecurities. It craves novelty (the learning and doing of new things), provided this can be taken on the personality's own terms, i.e., 'in its stride.' It craves risk as exhilarating—when it *is* exhilarating. But risk is exhilarating only at the points of peak energy storage in the individual's rhythms of personal living; and when risk is continuous or forced upon one the personality is put under unwelcome strain which invites discomfort, demoralization, and regression. . . .

"6. As a corollary of the preceding, the human personality craves the expression of its capacities through rivalry and competition, with resulting recognition of status—but, again, under the same circumstances as noted in 5 above: only when energy and interest are ready for it and the personality is 'set to go' and to go on its own terms. . . . It seems safe to say that

most human personalities do not crave as pervasive and continuously threatening competition as they tend to be subjected to in our culture.

"7. But if rivalry and the status it yields provide some of the arpeggios of living, the more continuous melody is the craving of the personality for human mutuality, the sharing of purposes, feeling, and action with others. The personality craves to belong to others richly and confidently and to have them belong in turn to it. It craves the expression and the receipt of affection. It craves to be actively accepted and given secure status as a person, *for* the person that it is—as well as for the work it can do. Sympathy is normal to it. Conversely, it suffers when forced to live in physical or psychological isolation. . . .

"8. The human personality craves coherence in the direction and meaning of the behavior to which it entrusts itself in the same or different areas of its experience. Contradictions and unresolved conflicts, within the rules it learns from the culture, create tensions and hinder functional satisfaction. Here is the point at which such aspects of our culture as the dual allegiance to the contradictory values of aggressive dominance and of gentleness and mutuality . . . throw us continually into tension.

"9. But the human personality also craves a sense of freedom and diversity in living that gives expression to its many areas of spontaneity without sacrificing unduly its corresponding need for basic integration of continuities. . . . And, conversely, it dislikes monotony, routine, and coercion that cramp and flatten out the rhythms of living and force a canalization of energy expenditure that deadens spontaneity.

"The preceding itemization of persistent cravings of the human personality might be condensed or expanded. Some of these cravings fall into contrasting pairs—security and risk, coherence and spontaneity, novelty and latency, rivalry and mutuality. Confronted with such contrasting tendencies, there is some disposition to dismiss the whole matter and to say that they cannot ever be reconciled. The important thing for the social scientist to note, however, is that these pairs do not represent contradictions any more than sleep is a contradiction of waking. They are but different phases in the rhythm of living. Obviously, no individual craves the independent maximization of each of these values, or of all of them at the same instant. That would involve an anarchy within the personality that would be intolerable. . . . The task of the sciences of human behavior, therefore, is not to 'reconcile' these different needs, but to discover the flexible cultural patterning in which their varied expressions in personality can find most adequate expression in the sequences of living."

Granted a general recognition of such basic needs of men, there must follow the careful development of

the understanding and consensus essential for substantial achievement in programs that require the collaboration of many groups and organizations. . . . These will be additions to, a replacement for some, and a strengthening

of other values developed in generations past in an essentially nonurban America. As we all know, these values have fared badly in recent years in most American metropolitan communities. They have lost their meaning and the allegiance that they used to hold on the beliefs and ideals of large numbers of American citizens. Urban living with its diversity, complexity, money standards, and impersonal character has dissolved or seriously weakened these older systems of beliefs and values. This weakening has been both a cause and an index of the low morale, indifference, and splintering of the urban body social and politic that we have discussed before.

The development of a valid, revitalized system of commonly understood and accepted beliefs and values is the crucial task of urban communities over the next generation or so. If the job can be done even moderately well, it will open the door for the making of physical, economic, political, and social cities that realize at least some of the potentialities of our highly developed technical competence. If we fail at this task, I at least can see little long-term hope for many worth-while programs and activities, including urban redevelopment in the usual sense of that term.

Mr. Woodbury gives blunt warning that if the city is to survive, the basic small community and other human needs must be met in the large city through better politics, informal groups, and

physical neighborhood units and social neighborhoods as one specific means of satisfying in part . . . the cravings of the human personality . . . for some degree of freedom and diversity that offset the monotony, routine, and coercion of many phases of modern urban life. Even with the phrase *in part* emphasized, this may seem like a sizable claim for the planning and development of new neighborhoods. It is a considerable claim but, I think, a defensible one.

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